

## Best Management Practices



# Beverage Container Recycling

*Why recycle? When you recycle you can: cut disposal costs; possibly create new revenue from the sale of recovered materials; and lessen your environmental impact by adopting sustainable practices. And recycling is not only good for the environment, it's also good for South Carolina's economy – providing more than 15,000 jobs and \$1.5 billion in annual personal income.*

If you have a break room, cafeteria or even just a vending machine at your business, chances are that there are aluminum cans and other beverage containers that can be recycled. Two-thirds of all beverage containers sold in the U.S. are disposed of in landfills, incinerated or littered. There's no reason for that. Beverage containers are among the most recyclable and economically valuable materials in the municipal solid waste stream.

Now that you've decided to recycle, here are some simple steps to start a recycling program.

### Gather the facts.

- **Assess you waste.**
  - How many beverage containers do you throw away?
  - Are they plastic, aluminum, glass or a combination of the three?
- **Find a market for your recyclables.**
  - To find a recycler, visit [www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](http://www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness) for market resources.
  - Find out what levels of service and prices are available to you from different recyclers.
  - For further assistance, contact your local solid waste department or call the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) at 1-800-768-7348. For additional information about recycling in your community, visit [www.scdhec.gov/recycle](http://www.scdhec.gov/recycle).

### Plan collection procedures.

- **Containers**
  - Determine the size and number of collection bins needed for your beverage containers. This will depend on how many people work in your building and how many different types of beverage containers you collect.
  - In most cases, you'll need to separate the aluminum, glass and plastic. Special multi-compartment containers are available. Check with your recycler on possible contaminants.
  - Keep in mind that recycling does not increase the overall volume of waste, but simply requires separation. Once containers are separated, it may be that the remaining waste is minimal and can allow downsizing of trash cans, etc., to accommodate new storage demands for containers.
- **Collection Locations**
  - It may serve you better to have beverage container collection bins located in break rooms, cafeterias and other common areas.
  - Make sure everyone knows where these collection bins are located.

### Let everyone know.

- **Signage**
  - Post signs on bins and around collection areas indicating what materials are acceptable and unacceptable.
  - Use pictures whenever possible.



## ■ Employee Education

- ❑ Get the word out to all employees about the new recycling procedures. Send e-mails giving instructions on how to properly recycle beverage containers.
- ❑ Mention the recycling program at staff meetings and keep employees informed of any changes and your success.

## ■ Custodial Staff

- ❑ It is very important to inform the custodial staff of these new procedures because they will most likely be responsible for some, if not all, of this process.
- ❑ Consider making signs to fit their needs.

## Collection Procedures

### ■ Aluminum Cans

- ❑ Empty contents. You may want to rinse out the can, but this is not necessary.
- ❑ You'll be able to fit more cans in your bin if you crush them.

### ■ Glass Bottles

- ❑ Empty contents. You may rinse out the bottle, but this is not necessary.
- ❑ Most recyclers accept clear, brown and green bottles.

- ❑ Make certain that bottles are not broken.
- ❑ DO NOT INCLUDE: ceramic coffee cups; drinking glasses; mirrors; Pyrex containers; and light bulbs.

## ■ Plastic Bottles

- ❑ Empty contents. Once again, you can rinse out the bottle, but this is not necessary.
- ❑ Most recyclers only accept #1 and #2 plastics. These can be identified by the code found on the bottom of the bottle.
- ❑ Common #1 plastics include soft drink and water bottles. Common #2 plastics include milk jugs and juice bottles.
- ❑ Remove caps or lids and discard. These are usually made of a different type of plastic that is not easily recycled.
- ❑ In most cases dairy tubs or containers and buckets are not recyclable.

## Give employees an incentive to recycle.

There's money in aluminum. Use the profits made from recycling your aluminum cans to thank employees by hosting a party or a cookout. Let them know that the aluminum cans they've been recycling helped pay for the festivities. You also could put the profits in a fund to assist employees in the event of an emergency. These gestures can go a long way toward motivating employees and increasing morale.

## R<sup>2</sup>: Recycle and Report

It's smart business to recycle. It's also smart business to report your recycling activities. South Carolina has set a goal to recycle 35 percent of its municipal solid waste. Your numbers count. Your numbers are needed to reach that goal.

Reporting is easy. **Keep track of what and how much you recycled.** You can keep your own records or your recycler may do it for you and report the information back to you. **Once you have the numbers, call your county recycling coordinator.**

For contact information on your county recycling coordinator, visit [www.scdhec.gov/recycle](http://www.scdhec.gov/recycle) and click on county programs or call DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling at **1-800-768-7348**.

Reporting is done by fiscal year so you need to keep track of your recycling activities from July 1 to June 30. You should report your information to your county recycling coordinator after June 30 (the earlier the better). **Do your part. Recycle and report.**

## Recycling. It doesn't cost. It pays.

For more information regarding business recycling and waste reduction, call **1-800-768-7348** or visit [www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](http://www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness).



*The South Carolina Smart Business Recycling Program is a partnership of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Center for Waste Minimization, Small Business Environmental Assistance Program and Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling as well as the S.C. Department of Commerce's Recycling Market Development Program. The program provides a variety of services to help businesses reduce waste, recycle and develop sustainable practices.*

South Carolina  
Department of Commerce

Printed on **RECYCLED** Paper  
OR-0683 12/07